

Following The 'Other' Paths

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Allaah says:

"And verily, this is My Straight Path, so follow it. And do not follow the other paths for they will separate you from His path."

[Surah Al-Ana'aam: 153]

The Messenger of Allaah (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) has informed us that the ummah (of Muslims) will divide into groups and sects, and that it will follow the ways of those nations that came before it in a close and identical manner, as he (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said:

"You will surely follow the ways of those who came before, inch by inch and hand-span by hand-span, such that if they were to enter into the hole of a lizard, you would follow them (in it)." They (the Companions) said: "(Do you mean) the Jews and the Christians?" He (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said: "Who else?"

[Agreed upon]

If you were to turn to the principles of these deviant groups, you would find, at the base of their principles that these principles have either branched out from the Jews or from the Christians.

He (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) also informed us that the differing in this ummah would be much more severe than what occurred between the Jews and the Christians. Thus, he (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said:

"The Jews and the Christians divided into seventy-two sects. And my ummah will divide into seventy-three (sects) - all of them will be in the Hellfire, except one."

They (the Companions) asked: "Which one is that, O Messenger of Allaah (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam)?" He (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said: "They are the ones who are upon the same thing that I and my Companions are upon today (i.e. from beliefs and methodology)."

This hadeeth is one of the signs of his (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) Prophethood for we can see this division and differing today, and its fire has burnt us. Every time a new era came upon the people, they saw more differing and greater dividing in it than that of times before. This is what the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) meant with his saying:

"Whosoever amongst you lives after me (i.e. my death), he will see much differing. So stick to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly guided Khaleefahs after me. Bite onto it (i.e. the Sunnah) with your molar teeth. And beware of newly-invented matters, for every newly-invented matter is an innovation."

Those of the Sahaabah who lived to an old age reached the times when this great differing appeared. So the appearance of the Khawaarij, the Mu'tazilah, the Raafidah, and the appearance of the first seeds of Sufism, all of that were from the signs and indications of this hadeeth.

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So the Messenger of Allaah (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) identified the sickness and he described its cure. Thus, differing is a sickness and its cure is holding

onto the Qur'aan and the Sunnah with the understanding of the predecessors of this ummah. It is for this reason that Allaah's Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) emphasized on the Sunnah of the rightly-guided khaleefahs, for their Sunnah does not divert from his Sunnah, nor does their way deviate from his (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) way. They established the truth and openly pronounced it. And through them, the truth was established and articulated. Allaah chose them to accompany his Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam), so He was pleased with them and they were pleased with Him.

Innovating into the Religion is the source and foundation of corruption. For this reason, Allaah's Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) warned against it saying:

"Beware of newly invented matters, for indeed, every newly-invented matter is an innovation and every innovation is a misguidance."

Some of the callers claim that having many groups in the field of da'wah is a phenomenon that is madiyyah (pleasing). But I say to them that having numerous groups is a phenomenon that is maradiyyah (unhealthy), because it signifies numerous and many differences. All of differing is evil and evil does not produce good. This is especially since some of these groups have aspects that coincide with some destroyed sects, such as declaring disbelief on someone due to sins, rejecting aahad narrations, rejecting the reports and narrations due to intellect and desires and denying Allaah's Attributes. There can be found both truth and falsehood in these groups. Every time they are close to the truth, they are close to the Straight Path, and every time they go farther away from it, they come closer to being the people of the "other" paths - the seventy-two destroyed sects, which the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) warned us about.

Due to this, we must know what falsehood is and who its people are, as well as what programs they have. This is so that they can be avoided and warned against. Likewise, we must know the way of those whom Allaah has bestowed his blessing on - and they are the Saved Sect. This could only be achieved through the authentic knowledge, which is established upon clear evidences and proofs from the Qur'aan and the authentic Sunnah with the understanding of the predecessors of this ummah.

Our foundation of support is the understanding of the Salaf (predecessors), as we have stated before, as we are stating now and as we will continue to state. This is because they were the most knowledgeable of people concerning Allaah and His Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam), and they were the ones who transformed the Qur'aan into a living and practical reality (i.e. practiced it in their lives and actions), as Allaah loved and was pleased with. Furthermore, the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) has given his testimony of their excellence, in the hadeeth reported by Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim in which he (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said:

"The best of mankind is my generation, then those that follow them, then those that follow them."

It was not known that the Salaf used to differ with regard to the issues of Creed. Shaikh-ul-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah (rahimahullah) said in Majmoo'-ul-Fataawaa (6/394):

"As for what I am stating now and which I write...with regard to all of what is stated in the Qur'aan from the verses on Allaah's Attributes, then the Companions

did not have any differences in their interpretations (of them). I have inspected the tafseers that are attributed to the Companions as well as what they reported from the hadeeth. And I read what Allaah willed from big and small books, more than one hundred tafseers, and I did not find, until this present hour, that any of the Companions committed ta'weel of the verses on Allaah's Attributes or the Ahaadeeth about the Attributes. This is in contradiction to what is commonly believed and understood. Rather, it is only reported on them that they agreed with these Attributes, affirmed them and clarified that they were from the Attributes of Allaah - all of which oppose the sayings of those who make ta'weel - to the extent that only Allaah can keep count of..."

Due to this, rectifying the people's beliefs and correcting their methodologies is the foundation of the call of the messengers as well as every call that is based on the authentic Sunnah. So differing is rejected in all of the issues of the Religion, especially in the aspects of Creed. It is not possible to unite the people before first correcting their beliefs, for this would mean disagreement, discord and the removal of Allaah's aid from them. This is since Allaah's accompaniment and assistance is not granted to people who commit Shirk nor those who are deviant and who are the leaders of misguidance. This is based on Allaah's saying:

**"Allaah will surely help those who help Him (by believing in Him alone).
Verily, Allaah is All-Strong, All-Mighty."**

So in following the Way of the Believers and avoiding the "other" paths, which Allaah and his Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) warned of, there is salvation from our present situation - of bad and evil consequences.

This is what the Qur'aan, the Sunnah and history bear witness to, but do we realize it?